



COLLABORATIONS



Fall/Winter 2001

The Newsletter for California's Community-Focused Court Planning and Court Community Outreach Initiatives

Vol. 3, Issue 4

"A new era of collaboration between county courts, the Judicial Council, and California's communities will lead to a renewal of public trust and confidence in the administration of justice and the primacy of the rule of law in California."
—Chief Justice Ronald M. George

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SUPERIOR COURT OF MODOC COUNTY ADDRESSES EMERGING TRENDS

Responding to the Judicial Council's request that California's trial courts rely on community input and outreach as a means of identifying and responding to emerging local trends, the planning committee of the Superior Court of Modoc County has carefully analyzed the 20 most important trends likely to shape the court's future. Some of the trends addressed by the court's strategic and operational plan include:

- Increasing juvenile crime;
- Increasing ethnic and racial diversity;
- An increasing demand for acceptance of alternative lifestyles;
- Increasing economic globalization and its effect on the local economy; and
- Increasing diverse expectations of the courts' role in society.

Led by **Presiding Judge Larry L. Dier**, the court's planning team has positioned the court to provide better services to the community as it confronts the considerable demands of the next few decades.

The Judicial Council reviews emerging trends specifically identified by the local courts at its annual planning meeting and relies on this important information in its own ongoing statewide planning. The Judicial Council's next Planning meeting will take place February 28 through March 1, 2002, in San Francisco.

COURT OPERATIONAL PLAN OBJECTIVES DATABASED Information to Be Used in Budget Priority Setting Process

November 16, 2001, was the requested due date for submission of trial court operational plans and/or revisions. To date, 43

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Visit the California Court and Community Collaboration Web Site:
www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/community

courts have responded to the AOC's request by submitting either a revised operational plan or a notice that plans previously submitted had not been revised. Each court's operational objectives are being put into a database at the AOC for inclusion in next fiscal year's budget priority survey process (conducted by the AOC's Finance Department). Beginning in fall 2002, survey forms will include operational plan information that is individualized by court. In completing the survey, courts will be asked to indicate how their budget priority requests correlate to the specific objectives in their plan.

Courts that have not yet responded to the earlier request for updated plan information are encouraged to do so at their earliest convenience.

The trial courts will next be asked to submit a revised operational plan in November 2005.

COURTS SUCCEED IN ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY- FOCUSED PROGRAMS Judicial Council Announces Results of Grant-Funded Planning and Outreach Project

The Judicial Council of California recently completed the grant-funded portion of a three-year statewide project to establish closer and more meaningful ties between the state's courts and the communities they serve.

The statewide planning and outreach project, funded in part by a grant from the State Justice Institute (SJI Grant #98-N-008) to the Judicial Council, is ongoing but has achieved several key initial objectives. A recent independent evaluation of the project conducted by the Justice Management Institute (JMI) of Denver, Colorado, concluded that the project's overall goal of creating more community-focused courts has been achieved. The JMI evaluation cites significant accomplishments, including the establishment of a process for developing, reviewing, and updating community-focused strategic plans and the added benefit of helping Califor-

nia citizens better understand the role of courts and judges in our system of government. The JMI evaluation also highlights several lessons from California's process that may be valuable to other court systems. These include the value of a statewide effort, the importance of matching process to local court cultures, the advantages of consultant and expert assistance, and the adoption of rules of court similar to California's that deal with the perception of judicial-ethical issues that arise when judges interact with the community.

The Judicial Council undertook the project in response to indicators of eroding public confidence in the courts. Believing that local court planning that includes community involvement is critical to improving court operations, the council established the Special Task Force on Court and Community Outreach in 1997 to encourage the courts to form planning teams and to open direct and responsive dialogues with the communities they serve. The SJI grant enabled the task force to stage a statewide training conference in 1998 at which court planning teams were introduced to a five-step strategic planning model emphasizing community involvement.

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Trial Court Strategic/Operational Plans for 2001–2002

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To carry on the efforts of the special task force after its sunset in 1998, the Judicial Council established the Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee (task force). The implementation committee augmented initial project efforts by using SJI funds to finance an instructional planning video and accompanying manual, as well as the establishment of a central clearinghouse on community-focused strategic planning and community outreach programs and resources. Grant funds also supported court regional training workshops in 1999 and 2000.

Products of the SJI-funded project have been widely distributed statewide and nationally—including to SJI libraries—and many of the materials are available for downloading at the California Court and Community Collaboration Web site

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/community/.

The State Justice Institute (SJI) is a nonprofit organization established by federal law to award grants to improve the quality of justice in state courts nationwide, facilitate better coordination between state and federal courts, and foster innovative, efficient solutions to

common problems faced by all courts. More information about the institute is available on the SJI Web site:

www.statejustice.org.

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COMMUNITY- FOCUSED INITIATIVES GRANT ANNOUNCED Funds to Be Used for Community Justice and Public Education Initiatives

The Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee (task force), Co-chaired by Hon. Judith McConnell and Hon. Veronica McBeth, recently announced \$280,000 in grants to support trial court community outreach and education efforts. The competitive grants, funded by the Trial Court Improvement Fund, are available in increments up to \$60,000 and can be applied for by individual courts or courts acting collaboratively.

Trial courts are invited to apply for grant funds under two broad categories:

- *Public education programs* – such as taking court to school, mock trials, peer courts, school/court curriculum partnerships, incentives

“First Impressions” of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County), work experience programs for youth (like the Court and Community Leadership and Liaison Academy of the Superior Court of San Joaquin County), and juror education and appreciation programs.

- *Community Justice Initiatives* — such as community courts, restorative justice programs, alternative sentencing programs, therapeutic justice programs, mediation services, alternative dispute resolution programs, and pro per help centers.

The application deadline is December 21, 2001. Grant awards will be announced in late January 2002. For more information, contact Jack Urquhart, 415.865.7654; jack.urquhart@jud.ca.gov.



Happy Holidays From the AOC

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**COURT COMMUNITY
ATTENDS SHAPING
THE FUTURE
CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 16–17,
2001, LOS ANGELES**

Over 160 members of California's court community attended the *Shaping the Future Workshop* in Los Angeles on October 16 and 17, 2001. The workshop, sponsored by the Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee, provided a forum for sharing successful community-focused court projects and for exchanging useful strategic planning strategies.

Singled out for special praise by attendees were the workshop's Knowledge Fair exhibits showcasing innovative programs and technology. The task force plans to expand the knowledge fair in future regional and statewide community-focused events.



**TASK FORCE
CHARTER RENEWED**

Citing the task force's important role in helping the courts to articulate a clear vision of public accountability, **Chief Justice Ronald M. George** re-

cently renewed the Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee's charter through December 31, 2002.

Co-chaired by **Hon. Judith McConnell** and **Hon. Veronica McBeth**, the task force will continue assisting the trial courts in institutionalizing court planning and community outreach and education.

**Contributions for
Collaborations? Contact
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